Allegany Ballistics Laboratory (US Navy) Site

EPA Region 3
West Virginia
Mineral County
2 miles South of
Cresaptown, Maryland

EPA ID# WV0170023691

2nd Congressional District

Last Update: May 2000

Other Names: None

Current Site Status

Allegany Ballistics Laboratory (ABL) has implemented remedial actions at three contaminated sites at the facility and investigated potential contamination at several additional sites. A pump and treat system started operation at the Northern Riverside Waste Disposal Area (Site 1) in October 1998. Within eight weeks of start-up the groundwater gradients were reversed and the system was capturing and treating all the contaminated groundwater beneath the Site 1. A RCRA Subtitle C landfill cap was installed at the Inert Non-Ordnance Landfill (Site 5) at the end of 1997 and long-term monitoring at the site has continued over the last two years. Three extraction wells and underground piping was installed at the Site PWA (Site 10) andwas connected to the treatment system at Site 1 in May 1999. ABL undertook a voluntary cleanup of several oil-water separator units and will close these units.

Additional investigations at the facility will be undertaken in 2000 and

there are plans for one additional Record of Decision to be issued this year.

Site Description

ABL is a 1,628-acre facility situated on the flood plain of the North Branch of the Potomac River, along the West Virginia and Maryland border. The land surrounding the site is primarily agricultural with some forestry. The facility, which began operations in 1942, is used for the research, development, and testing of solid propellants and motors for rockets, ammunition, and armaments for the Navy. There are two operating plants at ABL. Plant 1 is owned by the Navy and occupies 1,572 acres of the ABL facility. In 1995 Alliant Tech Systems Inc. acquired the Aerospace Division of Hercules and is the current operator at ABL. The remaining 56 acres are owned and operated by Alliant Tech Systems Inc. Plant 2, also called the Hercopel Plant, was not included as part of the National Priority List (NPL) site by EPA because no releases of hazardous materials are known to be associated with this facility. A variety of explosive and solvent wastes have been generated at ABL. Until 1978, the majority of these wastes were disposed of in on-site disposal areas.

Due to waste disposal and handling practices at the facility, there are several source areas of concern. Seven of these areas were aggregated into one source known as the Northern Riverside Waste Disposal Area (NRWDA) or Site 1, due to their proximity and the similarity of the hazardous substances deposited in the sites. Other contamination sources include two previous burning ground areas (Site 2 & 3), a spent photographic developing solutions disposal area (Site 4), an inert non-ordnance landfill (Site 5), a sensitivity test area/surface water impoundment (Site 6), a beryllium landfill (Site 7), an acid neutralization pit (Site 9), contaminated ground-water production well PWA (Site 10), and contaminated groundwater in production well F (Site 11). Contaminants associated with these sources and detected in groundwater and soil samples include explosives, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), acids, bases, laboratory and industrial wastes, bottom sludge from solvent recovery, metal plating pretreatment sludge, paints, and thinners. Some contaminants had moved off-site and were detected in the North Branch Potomac River. Five ABL water supply wells, which were found to contain VOCs, were taken out of service. Recent testing of

these wells, as well as numerous monitoring wells in the developed area, shows consistent VOC contamination in the groundwater.

Site Responsibility

Cleanup of this site is the responsibility of the Federal government.

NPL Listing History

Proposed Date: 06/23/93
Final Date: 05/31/94

Threats and Contaminants

Response actions undertaken by the Navy has greatly reduced the potential threats and risks from several sites. Contaminants found in the ground water and soil include explosives, VOCs, acids, bases, laboratory and industrial wastes, bottom sludge from solvent recovery, metal plating pretreatment sludge, paints, and thinners. The pump and treat system at Site 1 and the landfill cap at Site 5 has greatly reduced exposure to contaminants from the facility. Additionally, several water supply wells on the facility had been shut down to reduce potential exposure to contaminated groundwater.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html EXIT disclaimer

Cleanup Progress

Northern Riverside Waste Disposal Area (Site 1): In October, 1996, the Navy issued a Proposed Plan for Groundwater, Surface Water and Sediment for Site 1 and signed a Record of Decision (ROD) in May, 1997. The pump and treat facility started operation in October, 1998.

Non-Ordnance Landfill (Site 5): In October, 1996, the Navy issued a Proposed Plan for Landfill Contents and Soil for Site 5 and signed a ROD in February, 1997. The landfill cap was designed and constructed during the summer and was completed by November, 1997.

The contaminated materials in soils excavated from Site 7 were separated and disposal of both soil and waste streams occurred in 1997.

Site PWA (Site 10): In March, 1998 the Navy issued a Proposed Plan for Groundwater at Site 10 and signed a ROD in June 1998. A Remedial Design and Remedial Action Work Plan were approved and three extraction wells were installed at the site. The extraction wells were connected to the Site 1 treatment system and started operation in the May of 1999.

Contacts

Remedial Project Manager
Todd Richardson
215-814-5264
richardson.todd@epa.gov

The detailed Administrative Record can be examined at the following locations:

Fort Ashby Public Library
Box 74, Lincoln Street
Fort Ashby, West Virginia 26719
Contact: Jean Howser, 304/298-4493

La Vale Public Library
815 National Highway
La Vale, Maryland 21502
Contact: Sondra Ritchie, 301/729-0855